



# *Altamont Reformed Church*

*129 Lincoln Ave., Altamont, NY 12009*

October 2023

Rev. Matthew J. vanMaastricht

Dear Friends,

Throughout history, when explorers have gone out to find lost civilizations or to reach heights that no human has ever reached, they never go alone, but always take a guide with them. A guide may not have been down that exact route before, but a guide is familiar with the terrain and can help when issues, uncertainties, and problems arise. In many instances, a guide on an expedition can mean the difference between success or failure, life or death.

The spiritual life is an expedition of the soul. It's not the same as a physical expedition, but in many ways it is quite similar. An expedition of the soul takes us to new places, often where we have not been before. And this is where spiritual direction comes in.

As a pastor, my primary role is to be the spiritual guide of the community. My role is to try to keep God before the eyes of the community. But a community is also made up of individuals, and individuals are often on their own journeys in addition to the journey the community is on. And for this, individual spiritual direction can be helpful.

So what is spiritual direction? Spiritual direction is sharing the spiritual journey with a trained guide. Often a directee and director meet once a month, where the directee can speak about their experience of the spiritual life, and the director deeply listens to them, and to the Spirit, and seeks to help the directee to navigate their expedition. Just like Tenzing Norgay didn't make climbing Mount Everest easy for Edmund Hillary (it was still Mount Everest after all!), Hillary would never have made it without Norgay guiding and accompanying him to places where no human has ever gone.

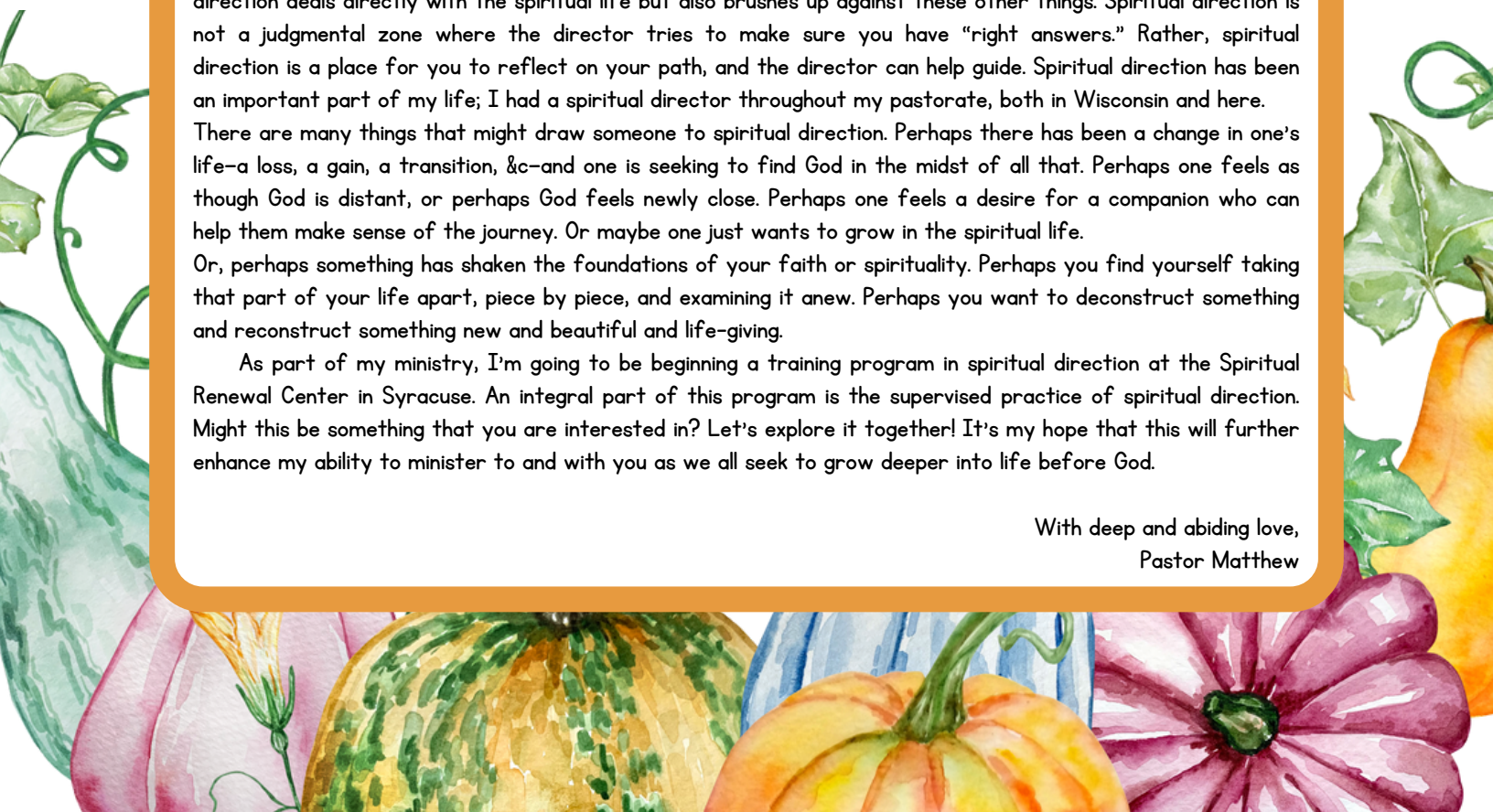
Spiritual direction is not counseling, though it can be helpful in combination. Whereas counseling often deals with emotional, psychological, or relational issues (but also brushes up against the spiritual life), spiritual direction deals directly with the spiritual life but also brushes up against these other things. Spiritual direction is not a judgmental zone where the director tries to make sure you have "right answers." Rather, spiritual direction is a place for you to reflect on your path, and the director can help guide. Spiritual direction has been an important part of my life; I had a spiritual director throughout my pastorate, both in Wisconsin and here.

There are many things that might draw someone to spiritual direction. Perhaps there has been a change in one's life—a loss, a gain, a transition, &c—and one is seeking to find God in the midst of all that. Perhaps one feels as though God is distant, or perhaps God feels newly close. Perhaps one feels a desire for a companion who can help them make sense of the journey. Or maybe one just wants to grow in the spiritual life.

Or, perhaps something has shaken the foundations of your faith or spirituality. Perhaps you find yourself taking that part of your life apart, piece by piece, and examining it anew. Perhaps you want to deconstruct something and reconstruct something new and beautiful and life-giving.

As part of my ministry, I'm going to be beginning a training program in spiritual direction at the Spiritual Renewal Center in Syracuse. An integral part of this program is the supervised practice of spiritual direction. Might this be something that you are interested in? Let's explore it together! It's my hope that this will further enhance my ability to minister to and with you as we all seek to grow deeper into life before God.

With deep and abiding love,  
Pastor Matthew



## Meal for Peace on Oct. 22

The Benevolence Committee invites you to join us during coffee hour on Sunday, Oct. 22, for a special "Meal for Peace". Enjoy a light lunch of African food (rice and beans and a vegetable salad prepared by members of our Committee), learn about the situation in South Sudan, talk about peace and peacemaking efforts by RCA Global Mission partner RECONCILE, and hear about the work of RCA mission partners Nancy and Shelvis Smith-Mather with refugees in that area. Special activities for children will be provided, as well. Plan now to stay for lunch!

## Community Dinner

Altamont Reformed Community Dinners return  
Monday, October 2!

Our very popular Free Community Dinner returns Monday, October 2. Don't miss a chance to enjoy good food and fellowship. We serve 5:00-6:30 p.m. Invite a friend.

An Opportunity to Serve -

Volunteer for our Community Dinners

Do you enjoy greeting people? Do you like to bake cupcakes? Do you enjoy cooking or serving food, washing dishes and pots and pans, or setting up tables and table settings? These are just some of the tasks that need to be done each month for our dinners. Volunteering for a dinner isn't just work, it is lots of fun. Our first fall dinner will be Monday, October 2. There will be sign-up sheets for specific tasks in Fellowship Hall.

# Happy Birthdays

Michelle Viola-Strait	October 1
Jeff Counterline	October 2
Rachael Conover	October 5
Margaret McKee	October 5
Hendrik vanMaastricht	October 8
Theresa Lasselle	October 12
Chris Tucker	October 19
Kristin Sargent	October 26
Ron Ginsburg	October 28
Judith Hilton	October 29

## Camp Fowler News

Camp Fowler will be hosting a family-friendly Creation Celebration on October 7. Preregistration is required by visiting <http://www.campfowler.org> and clicking on "events". A free will offering will be collected. Also, their annual Harvest Gathering fundraiser dinner will be Sunday, Nov. 5, from 3-6pm at the 1st Reformed Church of Scotia.

## Property Committee Update

The next project the Property Committee will soon undertake is the replacement of the front entry steps that lead into the sanctuary. As you probably have noticed, the wood steps have been rotting over the past couple of years, and now need immediate attention. In October they will be replaced with a composite lumber material that will hold up for many years. We apologize for the slight delay in completing this project, and meanwhile please continue to use caution when using the front steps.

Mark your calendars for the Annual Fall Clean-up Day, which is scheduled for Saturday, November 4, from 9am - noon. Besides raking, there are piles of brush as a result of trimming trees for the recent parking lot paving project, which we will load onto Greg's trailer to take to the landfill. Cider, coffee and doughnuts will be provided.

## FALL BOOK STUDY

The fall Altamont-Helderberg Reformed Book Group started Sunday September 24 at 6:30 p.m., but there is still time to join the group. This fall's study is *Kneeling with Giants, Learning to Pray with History's Best Teachers* by Gary Neal Hansen. This book will guide us on a 10-week journey of an invitation to a deeper connection to God by practicing different methods of prayer. Participants are invited to acquire books from their favorite bookseller or library, and there are some funds available if the book cost is in any way a barrier. This fall we meet at ARC.





## ***From the Missions***

### **CONSISTORY CONSIDERATIONS**

**Benevolence:** Plans are being made for a “meal for peace” on October 22, replacing the regular coffee hour. The purpose of this is to raise awareness. There is no fund raiser or a request for funding attached to this plan.

**Congregational Life Committee:** October 2 will be the first community dinner, and all volunteer slots have been filled. Forty people attended the church picnic at Bozenkill Park and twenty people are signed up to attend the Women’s Retreat on September 23.

**Faith Formation:** Carole deForest has been in discussion with several people in the congregation and a committee has been formed by Carole, Dan Capuano, Laurie Warner, Jan Chisholm, and Ellen Howie. They are planning on holding an idea sharing session open to everyone during the coffee hour on October 15.

**Finance:** There are plans to have Allan MacVean and the Finance Committee members join a consistory meeting at an undetermined date. Concern was expressed about the church finances being solely dependent on one person.

**Property:** Bill Johnson will chair this committee beginning in May 2024 after his term on Consistory ends. All work on the parking lot has been completed. Bill and Gardner Gurney will work on repairing the front steps of the church. The front steps are usable—with care.

**Worship:** Barb Sargent will replace Claudette Riek as the Consistory liaison to this committee.

**Board of Elders:** A certificate of dismissal was received and will be acted upon.

**Deacons’ Report:** The deacons will continue the practice of donating gift cards to the social worker at Altamont Elementary for Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Pastor Brad Kautz from the Jicarilla Apache Reformed Church reports that the Jicarilla Apache Nation celebrated its annual Fall Festival, Go Jii Ya, with RCA General Secretary Eddy Aleman in attendance. It was a blessing for him to meet many members of the JARC congregation and the tribe. Pastor Brad asks for prayers to be able to continue to share the hope of the Gospel as he begins his 11th year in ministry in Dulce. He has done 8 funerals in the past 8 weeks.

Janelle and Felipe Silva report that Ethan, a volunteer with the RCA Cultivate program, spent the summer as an intern at their climbing gym in Vulcan, Romania. They are grateful for his energy, openness, humor, and route-setting skills and wish him well as he returns to school.

Schenectady Community Ministries is hosting a Family Fall Festival at the Vale Urban Farm (use Brandywine entrance) on Oct. 26 starting at 4:30pm. Food, games, live music, and more. Adults: \$35, kids & seniors \$15,

Denny and Sue Barger write that Dreams Alive is planning another medical mission trip to Jordan in February and would welcome medical or dental professionals to join the team. They continue to support the Good Shepherd School in Amman, Jordan, and a K-12 regional school in the Nahla Valley of Iraq. They were also able to give a scholarship to a graduate of that school to attend medical school. Dreams Alive has a team in Germany working with Muslim refugees, and one in Latvia helping Ukrainians. The full letter is posted in the Missions Corner.

Recipients of our Camp Fowler scholarships have thanked us for our support. Their notes are on the bulletin board and contain comments like this: “Thank you for helping me go to camp this year.” “I had so much fun and can’t wait to go again next year.” “I had lots of fun making new friends and doing activities.” “My favorite part was when our canoe flipped over accidentally.”

Church office phone: (518) 861-8711

Church email:

[info@altamontreformed.org](mailto:info@altamontreformed.org)

ARC’s website:

<http://altamontreformed.org/>

The due date for the next edition

of the ARC Lite is

October 27





## Join us for Worship

### Sunday Morning Schedule

9:30 a.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal  
10:30 a.m. Worship service  
11:30 a.m. Coffee Hour in Fellowship Hall  
6:30 p.m. Fall Book Group at ARC

October 1 Communion;  
Community Dinner set up

October 22 Peanut Butter and Jelly  
Food Pantry Collection

## Important Dates

Monday, October 2	5-6:30 p.m.	Community Dinner
	7:00 p.m.	Men's Study Group
Thursday, October 5	7:00 p.m.	Chancel Choir rehearsal
Saturday, October 7	11:00 a.m.	Ron Sands Memorial Service
Tuesday, October 10	6:30 p.m.	Congregational Life Committee
Wednesday, October 11	6:00 p.m.	Chancel Choir Potluck dinner
	7:00 p.m.	Chancel Choir rehearsal
Monday, October 16	7:00 p.m.	Men's Study Group
Wednesday, October 18	7:00 p.m.	Consistory meeting
Thursday, October 19	7:00 p.m.	Chancel Choir rehearsal
Friday-Sunday, October 20-22		Peanut Butter and Jelly Food Pantry Collection
Thursday, October 26	7:00 p.m.	Chancel Choir rehearsal

